

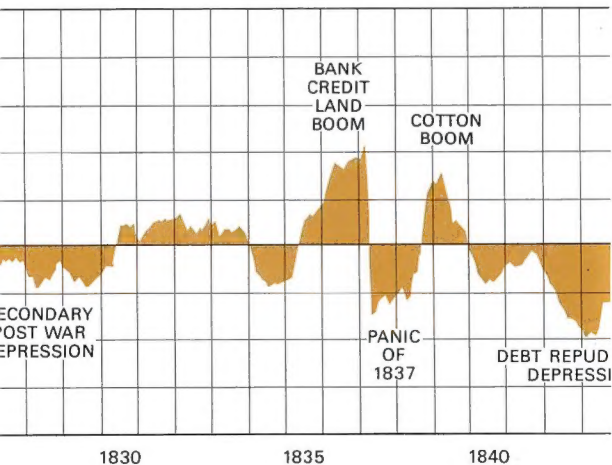
The completion of the construction of the first transcontinental rail line was marked by a ceremony at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869, at which a golden spike was used to join together the track laid by the Union Pacific with the track laid by the Central Pacific. The network of railroads crisscrossing the United States provided a vital element for the nation's growth by linking together all regions and making possible a free flow of goods in every direction.

Library of Congress



rapidly by developing better rails and by pioneering in the manufacture of iron beams and girders.

The Cooper-Hewitt enterprise demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt to challenge and competition. When inferior ores caused rails to splinter, Hewitt rediscovered a deserted mine that produced ores to make



— or soon the work is done

The Final Ceremonies. Edgar Mills, of Sacramento, read the program of ceremonies, after which the dedicatory prayer was offered by the reverend Dr. Todd, of Massachusetts. Then came the presentation of spikes—one of pure gold from California, one of silver from Nevada, and one of iron, silver and gold from Arizona. These spikes were presented, with appropriate speeches, to the President of the Central Pacific Railroad Company—Governor Leland Stanford, of California—who received the gifts in behalf of both companies, and responded with a suitable address. General Superintendent G. M. Dodge, for the Union Pacific Company, then said: "Gentlemen, the great Benton proposed that some day a giant statue of Columbus should be erected on the highest peak of the Rocky Mountains, pointing westward, denoting this as the great route across the continent. You have made the prophecy, today, a fact. This is the way to India." The last tie upon which the rails of the two roads met was put in position by S. B. Reed and J. H. Strowbridge, the two superintendents of construction. The tie was made of California laurel, beautifully polished, and was ornamented with a silver plate, bearing the names of the directors and officers of the Central Pacific Railroad Company.*

*The gold spike used in this ceremony was the gift of David H. Hervey, of San Francisco. It was seven inches long and worth \$460, having been made from twenty-three twenty-dollar gold pieces. As a matter of course, none of these valuable spikes went into the road. Like the silver-plated tie, which, as soon as laid, was removed, and an ordinary tie substituted, the spikes were preserved as mementoes of the occasion.

East and West Shake Hands. It was now half past twelve, and at a given signal Governor Stanford and Dr. T. C. Durant—the latter a Union Pacific notable—struck the spikes and drove them home. Telegraphic connection had been made in such a way that these blows were sent vibrating along the wires to every telegraph office between the Atlantic and the Pacific, between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. It was done by attaching the wires to the spike mauls, every blow from which announced itself as it fell. In San Francisco the wires were connected with the fire alarm in the Tower, and in Washington with the bell of the Capitol, so that the strokes of the silver sledge were not only heard throughout the land, but were sent ringing down the Potomac and out through the Golden Gate, to greet old Neptune in his watery realm and acquaint him with the glad tidings.*

No sooner was the last spike driven than the pent up feelings of the on-looking multitude burst forth in thunderous hurrahs. Three cheers were given for the Government of the United States, three cheers for the Pacific Railroad, three cheers for the Presidents, three for the Star-Spangled Banner, three for the laborers, and three for those who had furnished the means to build the road. The official announcement of

*The same electric flash caused the discharge of heavy guns from the batteries of San Francisco. Salt Lake City and other Utah towns received the tidings at thirty-two minutes past twelve. Instantly at the capital the Stars and Stripes were unfurled, brass and martial bands struck up lively airs, and artillery salutes were fired from Arsenal Hill and from the vicinity of the City Hall and the County Court House. A half holiday of general rejoicing followed.